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FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4152
INFO RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 2287
RUEHRB/AMEMBASSY RABAT 1877
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS 6716
RUEHTRO/AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
RUEHNK/AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT 6010
RUEHNM/AMEMBASSY NIAMEY 1268
RUEHBP/AMEMBASSY BAMAKO 0213

C O N F I D E N T I A L ALGIERS 001078

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/25/2017

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#) [AG](#)

SUBJECT: TO BE ALGERIAN AND IN A WHEELCHAIR

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Thomas F. Daughton;
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: The Algerian government does not adequately respond to the needs of the country's 3 million handicapped people, according to the officially recognized Algerian Federation of Wheelchair Associations. The group's president describes Algeria's handicapped as "living in isolation" at home because of an absence of infrastructure and services.
END SUMMARY.

THE VIEW FROM THE WHEELCHAIR

¶2. (U) Atika Mammeri, president of the Algerian Federation of Wheelchair Associations (AFWA), told poloff in a July 24 meeting that Algiera's handicapped population numbered 3 million, most of whom were victims of traffic accidents, work-related accidents and the terrorist violence of the 1990s. She estimated that at least 80 percent of Algeria's handicapped are illiterate and unemployed. Mammeri furnished a written summary of Algerian laws that provide support for the handicapped, laws she said lacked application. For example, she pointed out that even the social services office within the National Solidarity ministry, itself charged with the affairs of the handicapped, was not handicap accessible. Using herself as a reference point, she commented on her daily dependence on neighbors to carry her to and from her apartment to the street in order to go to work. She also provided photos showing the overall inaccessibility of Algiers, a city of hills and winding streets full of sidewalks and buildings that lack ramps. She added that public buses were not handicap accessible.

¶3. (U) Mammeri said the government provides a monthly stipend of 3000 dinar (approx USD 45) to individuals designated as 100-percent handicapped and who have no other source of income. But, she added, the money is only disbursed once every six months in a lump sum of 18,000 dinars. In addition, handicapped individuals found to receive other income have their government stipends reduced. Because of the small amount of money allotted by the government, relatives are compelled to supplement the income of the handicapped, Mammeri said. She acknowledged that the government provides support to AFWA, but said the annual contribution of roughly USD 7000 is insufficient, in that it covers only three months of the organization's expenses.

THE VIEW FROM THE GOVERNMENT

¶4. (U) The Ministry of National Solidarity's Khedidja Ladjel

Aloui told poloff July 24 that the number of handicapped in Algeria totals 1.5 million. Aloui referenced Algeria's laws that provide protection for the handicapped, but acknowledged that not all government buildings and schools are handicap accessible. Commenting on the monthly 3000-dinar government stipend available to individuals designated as 100-percent handicapped, Aloui said the small amount reflected budgetary constraints.

¶5. (C) COMMENT: Algeria is difficult for the handicapped, and they are rarely seen in public. Mammeri's comments and those of other handicapped individuals also echo a familiar refrain within civil society here: the Algerian government does little to engage its citizens.

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